

**DATES:** Comments must be received in writing by January 8, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be addressed to Makeba A. Morris, Chief, Technical Assessment Branch, Mailcode 3AP22, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III, 1650 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103. Copies of the documents relevant to this action are available for public inspection during normal business hours at the Air Protection Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III, 1650 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103; and the Maryland Department of the Environment, 2500 Broening Highway, Baltimore, Maryland, 21224.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ruth E. Knapp, (215) 814-2191, at the EPA Region III address above, or by e-mail at knapp.ruth@epamail.epa.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

For further information, please see the information provided in the direct final action that is located in the "Rules and Regulations" section of this **Federal Register** publication.

Dated: November 30, 1998.

**Thomas C. Voltaggio,**

*Acting Regional Administrator, Region III.*

[FR Doc. 98-32578 Filed 12-8-98; 8:45 am]

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

### 40 CFR Part 52

[MD076-3030b; FRL-6197-4]

#### Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Maryland; General Conformity Rule

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**ACTION:** Proposed rule.

**SUMMARY:** EPA is taking direct final action on the State Implementation Plan (SIP) revision submitted by the State of Maryland for the purpose of establishing a general conformity rule. The general conformity rule sets forth policy, criteria and procedures for demonstrating and assuring conformity of non-transportation related Federal projects to all applicable air quality implementation plans. EPA is proposing to approve Maryland's general conformity regulation as a SIP revision in accordance with the requirements of the Clean Air Act.

In the "Rules and Regulations" section of this **Federal Register**, EPA is approving the State's SIP submittal as a direct final rule without prior proposal

because the Agency views this as a noncontroversial submittal and anticipates no adverse comments. A more detailed description of the State submittal and EPA's evaluation are included in a Technical Support Document (TSD) prepared in support of this rulemaking action. A copy of the TSD is available, upon request, from the EPA Regional Office listed in the **ADDRESSES** section of this document.

If EPA receives no adverse comments, EPA will not take further action on this proposed rule. If EPA receives adverse comments, EPA will withdraw the direct final rule and it will not take effect.

EPA will address all public comments in a subsequent final rule based on this proposed rule. EPA will not institute a second comment period on this action. Any parties interested in commenting on this action should do so at this time.

**DATES:** Comments must be received in writing by January 8, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be addressed to Robert Kramer, Chief, Energy, Radiation and Indoor Environment Branch; Mailcode 3AP23; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III; 1650 Arch Street; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103. Copies of the documents relevant to this action are available for public inspection during normal business hours at the Air Protection Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III, 1650 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103; and the Maryland Department of the Environment, 2500 Broening Highway, Baltimore, Maryland, 21224.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Larry Budney, (215) 814-2184, at the EPA Region III address above, or by e-mail at budney.larry@epamail.epa.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** For further information, please see the information provided in the direct final action to approve the Maryland General Conformity regulation, which is located in the "Rules and Regulations" section of this **Federal Register** publication.

Dated: November 24, 1998.

**Thomas Voltaggio,**

*Acting Regional Administrator, Region III.*

[FR Doc. 98-32573 Filed 12-8-98; 8:45 am]

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

### 40 CFR Part 58

[FRL-6198-6]

RIN 2060-AH92

#### Air Quality Index Reporting

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**ACTION:** Proposed rule.

**SUMMARY:** EPA proposes to change the uniform air quality index used by States for daily air quality reporting to the general public in accordance with section 319 of the Clean Air Act (Act). These proposed changes include the addition of the following elements: a new category described as "unhealthy for sensitive groups," new breakpoints for the ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) sub-index in terms of 8-hour average O<sub>3</sub> concentrations, a new sub-index for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), and conforming changes to the sub-indices for inhalable particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO), and sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>). These proposed changes reflect the revisions to the health-based primary national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for O<sub>3</sub> and particulate matter (PM) published in the **Federal Register** on July 18, 1997. This document discusses the development of related informational materials on pollutant-specific health effects and sensitive groups and on precautionary actions that can be taken by individuals to reduce exposures of concern. This document also discusses the interrelationship between the uniform air quality index and other programs that provide air quality information and related health information to the general public, including State and local real-time air quality data mapping and community action programs.

**DATES:** Written comments on this proposed rule must be received by January 25, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments (in duplicate if possible) on the proposed rule to: Air and Radiation Docket and Information Center (6102), Attn: Docket No. A-98-20, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St., SW, Washington, DC 20460.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Terence Fitz-Simons, MD-14, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, EPA, Research Triangle Park, NC 27711, telephone (919) 541-0889, e-mail fitz-simons.terence@epamail.epa.gov. For health effects information contact Susan Lyon Stone, MD-15, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, EPA,